



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on June 9, 2015 at 6 p.m.

## **PRC MINUTES June 9, 2015**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **PRC Present:**

Elaine Powell, Chair  
Kendel Bryant, Vice Chair  
Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary  
Sheryl Smith  
Brenda McMoore  
Doug Burnett  
Charlie McRee  
Ed Barnhart  
Aubin Guinness

Jim Garges, Director, Park and Recreation  
Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director, Park and Recreation

#### **PRC Absent:**

Norman Mitchell  
Vacant – At Large  
Vacant – South (S3)  
Vacant – North (N2)

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair Powell welcomed all to the June 2015 PRC meeting.

#### **Proclamations and Awards:**

Director Garges, recognized the service of Commissioner's who terms have been completed and took the opportunity to say a special thanks for all the work and effort they have put into helping the Department, saying we are a better Department today because of their efforts.

- Joe Pata, past At Large Park and Recreation Commissioner, was presented with a certificate indicating a Yoshino Cherry Tree will be planted, in honor and appreciation of his service on the Commission, at the Mecklenburg County Sportsplex at Matthews.

- Rob Brisley, past Chair and South Region (3) Park and Recreation Commissioner, (**not present**) was recognized and a Crape Myrtle Tree will be planted, in honor and appreciation of his service on the Commission, on Little Sugar Creek Greenway.
- Charlie McRee, Central Region (3) Park and Recreation Commissioner, was presented with a certificate indicating an Oak Tree will be planted, in honor and appreciation of his service on the Commission, on Little Sugar Creek Greenway.
- Brenda McMoore, Central Region (2) Park and Recreation Commissioner, was presented with a certificate indicating a Magnolia Tree will be planted, in honor and appreciation of her service on the Commission, in Frazier Park.
- Norman Mitchell, At Large Park and Recreation Commissioner, (**not present**) was recognized with a crystal award, in honor and appreciation of his service on the Commission.

Director Garges also recognized the recent retirement of Joey Grahl, South Recreation Manager. Jim described Joey as a steady, solid professional who gave his all to the Department and his staff. Joey will be greatly missed.

### **Public Appearance – Cutter Davis, Eagle Scout Veteran Memorial Project Update**

Jeff Robinson, Division Director of Park Operations recognized Cutter Davis for an update on his Eagle Scout project.

Commissioner McRee introduced Cutter, a 16 year old Life Scout of Troop 55 working on his Eagle Scout project to place a D-Day memorial in a Mecklenburg County Park to honor all the residents of Mecklenburg County who participated in D-Day. Commissioner McRee shared that Cutter's inspiration came from his friendship with D-Day veteran, Harold Eatman, of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne/505 PIR. Cutter has been before the Central Park Region Advisory Council on 3 occasions to present his proposed project and has gained the full support and endorsement of the Central Park Region Advisory Council.

Cutter Davis presented each Commissioner with a project handout and gave a brief update. (**NOTE:** A full report on this project and a copy of the handout is available in the June 9, 2015 PRC Agenda Binder, **Section 3a**, housed in the Director's office.)

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to endorse the Eagle project proposal as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner McMoore and approved unanimously.

### **Program/Staff Presentations:**

#### **Budget Administration – Mario Chang**

Mario Chang, Senior Fiscal Administrator shared the most current FY16 Recommended Budget for the Department saying that, while the Department did not get all that was asked for, the budget was well thought out and what has been recommended in light of all the other concerns and needs of the County is much appreciated. (**NOTE:** The PowerPoint presentation by Mario can be viewed in the June 9, 2015 PRC Agenda Binder, **Section 4a**, housed in the Director's office.)

Director Garges explained that even though the recommended budget does not fund deferred maintenance in the operating budget as requested, it is important to know that the County

Manager is recommending an additional 4 million in the capital budget to cover deferred maintenance at locations where existing capital projects are getting ready to get underway. Along with the 1 million recommended in the operating budget, this will total a 5 million dollar bite out of deferred maintenance. In addition, the following will be requested in the capital budget and has the County Manager's support:

- \$4.3 million to adjust the project numbers of 20 projects currently ready to go out to bid. The numbers for these projects were pre-recession and are now under funded.
- \$2.5 – \$3 million for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Gym project
- \$4 million for the Queens Tennis project

Director Garges also shared that the County Manager's budget is conservative to stay within a policy to not raise taxes and to not increase the debt capacity so that the fund balance will remain strong.

Chair Powell expressed the Commissions total respect for the County Manager, but felt that as an advisory board to the BOCC, it is important for them to express their concerns at the public meeting on June 10. Therefore, after much discussion and opportunity for all the PRC to contribute their budget concerns, the following main concerns will be presented to the BOCC at the public hearing:

- Support for the **senior initiative**. The ask for this budget item was \$725,000 and is not funded in the recommended budget. Commissioner McMannis will speak to this at the public hearing.
- Take care of **current assets**. The ask for deferred maintenance was \$4.3 million and the recommended budget is \$1 million. The ask for contracts, supplies and materials was \$627,084 and the recommended budget is \$150,000. Commissioner Guinness will speak to this at the public hearing.
- Continue to make **park safety** a priority. Requested positions for Park Rangers are not funded in the recommended budget. Commissioner Burnett will speak to this concern at the public hearing.

### **2008 Master Plan Update – Michael Kirschman**

Deputy Director, Michael Kirschman, gave a brief presentation on the recommended 2008 Master Plan update. This was the second presentation to the PRC in addition to the presentations at their respective advisory councils. All advisory councils, having heard the recommended update, have given their endorsement with the exception of the Golf Advisory Council. The Golf Advisory Council will receive the presentation at their August meeting.

Commission Barnhart pointed out that the Master Plan, approved by the BOCC, is the template for the Department's budget request each year. Deputy Director Kirschman responded in agreement and added that while the BOCC did approve the 2008 Master Plan, they did not approving the funding, which is a year to year process. However, all budget requests are tied back to the Master Plan. (**NOTE:** The 2008 Master Plan Update presentation is included in the June 9, 2015 PRC Agenda Binder, **Section 4b**, housed in the Director's office.)

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Bryant to endorse the recommended update to the 2008 Master Plan, which was seconded by Commissioner McMoore and approved unanimously.

## **Park Amenity Naming at West Branch Nature Preserve – Chris Matthews**

Chris Matthews, Division Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources, brought before the Park and Recreation Commission a request to endorse the naming of the trail and overlook at West Branch Nature Preserve in memory of Roy Alexander. Roy Alexander, who passed away in January of 2015, was the executive director of the Davidson Lands Conservancy and a longtime Mecklenburg County environmental educator and conservationist. Roy was instrumental in the preservation of the wetlands by successfully advocating changing the proposed development around the wetlands. While the defined wetland was precluded from development by law, the surrounding area had to be preserved if the ecosystem of the wetland was to be sustained, since many of the species that comprise the ecosystem spend major portions of their life cycle in the surrounding natural habitat.

The proposed naming at West Branch includes the one mile trail built by the Carolina Thread Trail, one of the best examples of a sustainable natural trail construction in the Park and Recreation system, and the overlook into the wetlands, which will contain a kiosk telling of Roy's work and contributions. The family and the Stewardship Advisory Council are in full support of the proposed naming.

Commissioner Barnhart asked about the name of the memorial. Chris Matthews responded that "The Roy Alexander Memorial Trail at West Branch" is being considered but this is not yet definitive.

Commissioner Guinness expressed a concern rising from the knowledge that the Summers Walk development would like to see a paved connection to the nature preserve. Aubin asked that any consideration for a connection in the future be carefully considered and that it not impact the memorial section of the preserve. Chris Matthews responded that future plans for a connection from the cul-de-sac to the Cabarrus County line would not impact the preserve or memorial and should satisfy the desired connections.

**Motion was made** by Chair Elaine Powell to endorse the naming of the trail and overlook at West Branch Nature Preserve in memory of Roy Alexander, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart and approved unanimously.

## **Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments:**

**Athletics Advisory Council:** At the recommendation of James Alsop, Division Director of Enterprise Services:

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Barnhart to reappoint **Thomas Lee** and **Jennifer Miller** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring June, 2018, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee and approved unanimously.

**Central Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to reappoint **Darryl Gaston** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner McMoore and approved unanimously.

#### **Cooperative Extension Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to reappoint **June Hood, Karla Robinson, Robert Robinson and Robin Emmons** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018; to reappoint **Joyce Trott** to a 2<sup>nd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018 and to appoint **Marilyn Gore** to fill an unexpired term, expiring 6/2016, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart and approved unanimously.

#### **Greenway Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Barnhart to reappoint **Gordon Clark, Rick Winiker and Tom Watson** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018 and to make a special reappointment of **Mark Loflin and Richard Winters** to a 3<sup>rd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously.

#### **North Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Bryant to reappoint **Iris Bonano and Jeff Presson** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018; to reappoint **Anthony Morrison and Nathan Stanford** to a 2<sup>nd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018 and to make a special reappointment of **Cathy Joe Young** to a 3<sup>rd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Guinness and approved unanimously.

#### **South Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Burnett to reappoint **Daniel Cook, Rodger Nolden and Michael Mulder** to a 2<sup>nd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018, and to appoint **Lindsay Jones** to an unexpired term, expiring 6/2017, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant and approved unanimously.

#### **Sr. Citizen Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McMannis to reappoint **Fran Mathay and Howard Braverman** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018; to reappoint **Rosalind Taylor, Chuck Bennett and Pearl Stitt** to a 2<sup>nd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018 and to make a special reappointment of **Bill Marchant** (by e-mail voice vote on 6/15/2015) and **Peggy McDonald** to a 3<sup>rd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant and approved unanimously.

#### **Stewardship Advisory Council:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Powell to reappoint **Joshua Prescott** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018; to reappoint **Alicia Roberts** to a 2<sup>nd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018; to make a special reappointment of **Sharon Wilson** to a 3<sup>rd</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018 and to appoint **Kelly Thames** to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously.

#### **Director's Report**

**Little Sugar Creek Greenway Map:** Director Garges invited the Commission to view the full map of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway which includes the last 5 miles to the South Carolina line and all the connections.

**Arts and Science Council Budget Increase:** Chair Powell asked the Director to explain the \$300,000 in the proposed budget for the Arts and Science Council. Jim explained that they asked for additional funding to provide programming in parks and libraries in underserved areas. Terri Stowers added that the Community and Recreation Center Services Department has worked closely with the Arts and Science Council over the years and will continue to work with them and their proposed programming.

## **Consent Items**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to approve all consent items, including the Park and Recreation Commission minutes of May 12, 2015, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant, and approved unanimously.

## **PRC Reports and Requests**

**Summer Camp Availability:** Commissioner McMoore expressed concern, stemming from a few citizen complaints, regarding summer camp programs that were offered last summer and are not being offered this year, such as at Ivory Baker and Wallace Pruitt. Terri explained that they had tried to offer camps in the past without the additional staff necessary to run them. This stretched staff too thin and made it difficult to staff and program the centers during the evenings. To the best of their ability and with the information available, the parents were notified of the discontinuation of these camps by e-mail and mail. However, Terri explained, several camps are being offered through our partners at Tuckaseegee, Wallace Pruitt, Sugaw Creek and Methodist Home, all of which still have openings as well as the sport camps at Revolution Parks Sports Academy.

**Emergency Response – Harrisburg:** Commissioner Bryant shared that Commissioner Dunlap contacted her regarding an incident in a park located between Robinson Church Road and Harrisburg Road. The area fire department was called to respond to a motorcyclist on the park trail who had a heart attack and finding the exact location of the person was difficult.

Director Garges responded that he was not 100% sure if this a Mecklenburg County Park, but that he would have Jeff Robinson look into it and get back with her.

**Outgoing Commissioners:** Commissioners shared well wishes and memories with each other of their times together serving the community.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.